

Physical and Mental Health Community Collaborative Notes

SVSU/Delta/F.A.S.T

4/12/2017

Attendees:

23 total attendees:

- 1 identified as an expert in the Housing Domain
- 3 identified as experts in the Community Connections & Supportive Relationships Domain
- 2 identified as experts in the Identity Domain
- 4 identified as experts in the Life Skills Domain
- 1 identified as an expert in the Finances & Employment Domain
- 5 identified as experts in the Education Domain
- 1 identified as an expert in the Physical & Mental Health Domain
- 3 Young Adults with Experience in Foster Care

Passport activity reflections:

- Housing was hard to fill—only one professional identified being knowledgeable in this domain
- Generally speaks to challenges and difficulties in this work

Poll Everywhere:

Challenges in physical and mental Health domain

- Don't know who to ask: overarching theme for young people with experience in foster care
- Knowing how to ask for help...is it safe to ask.
- Sometimes you do not even know what you need, let alone who to ask. Identification of first need, skill to ask, someone to ask.
- "I'm on my own, I have to figure this out myself"
- I should know how to do this.
- If expectation has been set that you should be "independent", it is often hard to ask for help.

Recommended: Review ACES study to get a better understanding of how trauma effects increased later physical and mental health issues.

When you think of this life domain, what

Ted: Having a support system, impact of relationships on both physical & mental health

Michael: dealing with a learning disability, struggling through school, having a support system in college, knowing how to organize and keeping my base functional

Heather: holistic domain, all other domains are tied into it—genetics and environment

Brandy: Good relationships are important for good mental health—positive reflection, how to get out of bad situations into better ones

Kayla: foundational domain, impacts everything—physical & mental health impact one-another very directly

MD: maintaining balance, skills focused on best self in this domain, impact and is impacted by all the other life domains

How does this domain impact your work/life?

Alex: physical & mental health—things you are faced with in foster care that you are forced to overcome in adulthood, might not realize it at first. Mental health—struggled with ADD, anxiety/depression—side effects of going through foster care system. Forces you to seek out a lot of help, be humble, recognize that you have things you have to deal with—pushes you to strive for better health, become a better person

Kayla: practice what I preach—it all starts here: take care of things on my end so I can be my best self for my students.

Brandy: going through FC you go through things and you have to seek out those who know how to help you. In my personal life I realize I have to be my best and on my game so I can do the things that are asked of me so I don't fall behind in school

Heather: college is stressful. Finding a balance in life is important. Stress can be an amplifier for all other mental health issues. Keep people connected to the right resources, maintain trauma-informed care. We don't know what our students have experienced unless they tell us.

Michael: struggling with mental health. Sustaining your own needs, staying motivated to seek help. If you don't...you fall off your own bandwagon and fall into a tumble—keep things regular and organized, find different coping skills

Ted: lack of trust, lack of sense of belonging in relation to students with experience in fc. Teachers/counselors can build relationships---show consistency/build consistency. No one is exempt from going to counseling—you can't pour out of an empty cup.

MD: knowing yourself, knowing what you need, then being willing to ask for it and access it...strive for better. All three professionals, you start with yourself being healthy. We can forget in the helping profession that we need to show by example...why would they believe us that these things work? The student is the expert in their own lived experience. Balance. Accessing resources. Finding help when needed.

What are the challenges you have encountered related to this domain and how have you resolved them (systemic challenges)?

MD: Stigma, availability, accessing available resources, knowing who to ask, building trust...

Ted: with FY, the biggest problem I've had is a sense of independence—they didn't want to seek help—goes back to the trust thing. Every person I know in my life is afraid to ask for help—cultural thing. Blowing out a candle instead of putting out a forest fire—little things build up.

Michael: Not understanding, not trying to understand. Maybe the youth won't then be so prideful in seeking out help.

Heather: stigma—being affiliated with a campus-based support program. Sometimes students, once they're out after 18 don't want that affiliation. We place more emphasis on physical health than on mental health—I'd like to see more equality placed on both of them.

Brandy: it's important to realize that sometimes your friends/roommates/etc. are the reason you are having an issue with your mental health. Seeking out help w

Kayla: education around physical and especially mental health—trauma-informed psychoeducation. Education around dieting, what do you need to have to be healthy? During the time some of my students in care experienced is forced therapy—it was not helpful, not what they wanted or needed at the time. Now they have aversions to seeking out mental health treatment—strong pushback

Alex: Stigma, but to elaborate, it's important for everyone to seek mental wellness. It's important for others to reach out to those in care or those that have experienced it. The stigma I've experienced is, because I've been in care, I have some disorder that needs curing. It's important to not assume someone has issues just because someone has been in foster care.

Audience question: accessing medical records can be a challenge, for an education professional, what would you recommend as a solution to this?

Kayla: it can be very difficult. One of the things that I've tried to do is just have more conversations with the youth about how they can make connections to their past.

Michael: sometimes DHHS might have that information.

Audience question: what are some suggestions/techniques for students who are struggling with mental health before they come to college?

Michael: I have a neighbor who was in foster care, too. Finding someone who has been through that same struggle. Not someone who isn't stable but someone who has it together who you can give and get advice. A point of view from a peer and a point of view from someone who is older/a professional.

Brandy: find a stress-reliever. Talking, journaling, coloring...it helps to realize where you are in your life.

Alex: Focus on the future, not fixing something that's broken but making your goal to become the best person you can be/self-actualize. Can start with physical health...diet, exercise, sleep

If you could make one collaboration happen, develop a resource, change something about the system to help improve success in this domain, what would it be?

Kayla: I think I would just get rid of the stigma of it; it can be a huge barrier. More realistically, a greater collaboration between physical health providers and mental health providers—they're silos.

Heather: Moving forward with events like this, collaborating, sharing information

Michael: strive to talk with more youth, get an understanding, help everybody. I like to collaborate with the government.

Ted: collaborating with community resources. Knowing how many people who are out there that care. Mental health clinics to provide free mental health screenings.